

TIP OF THE SPEAR

27th Special Operations Wing holds first Capabilities Exercise



- ♠ **Fuerzas Comando held in the Dominican Republic**
- ♠ **Naval Special Warfare Command remembers Operation Red Wings**
- ♠ **USSOCOM hosts first Joint Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy**

U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., August 2010



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



27th Special Operations Wing conducts its first capabilities exercise22

Tip of the Spear

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Best magazine format in DoD 2007 and 2008

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A CV-22 Osprey flown by the 27th Special Operations Squadron exfiltrates a Special Operations team during a capabilities exercise June 26. The CAPEX was held at Melrose Air Force Range, N.M., and was conducted to educate Airmen and their families about the mission and capabilities of the 27th Special Operations Wing. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Josef Cole.

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SOF AROUND THE WORLD - DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – SOUTH



Paraguayan special operations team members carry an inflatable raft during the Fuerzas Comando aquatic event at Calderas Naval Base, Dominican Republic, June 18. The team carried the boat, which weighed more than 400 pounds, for 400 meters during the first portion of the event. Photo by Sgt. Shane Hamann.

Special Operations Teams from 18 nations compete in “Fuerzas Comando” exercise in Dominican Republic

By Spc. Walter Guthrie

Special Operations Command South Public Affairs

National pride, mutual respect and competitive spirit filled the air as elite special operations personnel from 18 countries across the Western Hemisphere assembled at the Dominican Army's 1st Infantry “August 16” military base for the seventh annual Fuerzas Comando event June 16-24 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Fuerzas Comando is a U.S. Southern Command-

sponsored exercise that tests special operations teams on weapons marksmanship, physical fitness, aquatic skills, and tactical capabilities.

“Fuerzas Comando's primary objective is to promote regional cooperation between nations in order to deal with the common threats we face,” said Army Brig. Gen. Hector Pagan, the commanding general of U.S. Special Operations Command South.

This year, teams from Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El

Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States and Uruguay participated in the special operations competition and senior leader seminar. Although not partaking in the competition portion of the exercise, representatives from Guyana participated in the senior leader seminar.

During the week-long event, competitors underwent a series of challenges including sniper stalking, range estimation and other critical tasks. They also competed in sniper evaluations, such as “snaps and movers,” an aquatic challenge, stress test, unknown distance range, forced march, obstacle course and combined assault.

Following the opening ceremony, competitors were given a few hours of rest before the first event, a physical fitness test. During the evaluation, participants completed as many push-ups and sit-ups as possible within one minute for each. Competitors also completed as many pull-ups and dips as possible. The test concluded with a 1.5-mile run.

On the first days of competition, individual and team marksmanship skills were assessed during a series of rifle, pistol and sniper evaluations. These tests lasted three days at ranges outside the compound. While every portion of the competition was demanding, there were several events that were particularly mentally and physically straining for the Soldiers, particularly the critical task event, which placed real-life situations and obstacles before the competitors.

During this event, obstacles identified as “noncombatants” were placed in the vicinity of the shooter’s target, testing the shooter’s ability to successfully hit the targets without hitting the obstacles. This evaluation put competitors’ speed and accuracy to the test with two different weapons; competitors started firing with rifles then transitioned to pistols. This event proved to be a challenge for many.

“Most people think it’s easy to shoot one weapon, but transitioning from one to the other really makes you think,” said a member of the Trinidad and Tobago special operations team.

While the critical task event required mental concentration, others, such as the aquatic competition, demanded more physical stamina.



Members of the U.S. Special Operations team traverse a concrete barrier as part of an obstacle course event during Exercice Fuerzas Comando 2010, June 22. Each team, altogether representing 18 countries from the U.S., Central and South America and the Caribbean, had to complete each obstacle as a team before moving to the next. Photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua Johnson.

During this event, the competitors ran through more than 2.5 miles of unforgiving sand and hot pavement while carrying a 400-pound inflatable raft.

After the run, the teams hit the water. This portion of the challenge tested each team’s ability to work together while rowing and swimming across long stretches of water carrying heavy equipment.

For some of the elite personnel competing in Fuerzas Comando, this event proved to be the most difficult.



SOF AROUND THE WORLD - DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – SOUTH



Special Operation teams from 18 nations across the Western Hemisphere stand in formation during the opening ceremony of this year's Fuerzas Comando exercise June 16 at the 1st Dominican Infantry Brigade "August 16" military base. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Alex Licea.

"All of the events were demanding, but the Aquatic event is the toughest of the competition," said a Jamaican team member.

But many participants said teamwork was the key to success.

"It's very challenging because of the water and the wind," said a member of the Belize special operations team. "However, it is important to stay together as a team all the way to the finish line."

The final day of competition included the obstacle course and the combined assault. Despite unfavorable conditions on the obstacle course due to heavy rain, each group showcased maximum effort on the course in order to earn the fastest time crossing balance beams, scaling high walls, climbing long ropes and more.

With mud-covered uniforms and heavy boots, the competitors then traveled to the combined assault exercise, which challenged their military assault skills. Overall, the special operations competitors faced and overcame the challenges presented in the competition.

As the competitors battled for the title of the most elite special operations team on the Dominican military compound, senior military members gathered in a sign of unity during the senior leader seminar off base.

Each participating nation sent a senior special operations officer and a ministerial-level policy maker to discuss security challenges and possible solutions. The Senior Leader Seminar provided a collaborative, cooperative and innovative environment for regional security policy makers. Guest

speakers included Air Force Gen. Douglas Fraser, the commander of U.S. Southern Command, and Navy Rear Adm. Daniel B. Lloyd, the director of Joint Interagency Task Force South.

Senior leaders discussed a number of key topics, such as illicit trafficking and terrorism, and talked about how to counter those threats in order to maintain safety and security throughout the Western Hemisphere.

When the points were tallied, Ecuador was named this year's Fuerzas Comando champion and took home the coveted "Fuerzas Comando Cup." The Dominican Republic team placed second and El Salvador finished third. The U.S. won the Assault competition and tied Uruguay for first place in the Sniper events.

During the closing ceremony, Pagan, along with Dominican Army Brig. Gen. Pablo Cavallo Feliz, the commander of the 1st Infantry Brigade, addressed the competitors and discussed the significance of how this year's Fuerzas Comando will bring lasting memories for each participant.

"I am convinced that all of you will depart with great memories of this event, and you will always be welcomed in our country," Feliz said. "We are all winners because we take home with us the memory of brotherhood and closeness."

Fuerzas Comando 2011 is scheduled to be held in El Salvador.



(1) A soldier from the Trinidad and Tobago Special Operations team fires his weapon during the Critical Skills competition June 18 at the Dominican Army's 1st Infantry Brigade in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic during Fuerzas Comando 2010. Photo by Isidro Almonte. **(2)** A Costa Rican Special Operations team low-crawls under barbed-wire as part of the Obstacle Course event June 22. Photo by Adriano Martinez-Medina. **(3)** A Panamanian Special Operations commando checks his sights before the Fuerzas Comando Sniper Stalking event June 17. Photo by Spc. Walter Guthrie. **(4)** The Dominican Republic Special Operations team begins the rowing portion of the Fuerzas Comando Aquatic event June 19. Photo by Spc. Walter Guthrie.






SOF AROUND THE WORLD - AFGHANISTAN
COMBINED JOINT SPECIAL OPERATIONS TASK FORCE - AFGHANISTAN

ANA Commandos train for future missions, demonstrate capabilities on the battlefield

*By Navy Lt. Arlo Abrahamson
CJSOTF-A Public Affairs*



From the mountains surrounding Camp Morehead, Afghanistan, a remote training outpost, echoes of enthusiasm ring out below as columns of Afghan National Army Commando recruits scream out a cadence before they begin a close-quarters drill.

Camp Morehead, on the outskirts of Kabul, is home to Afghanistan's maturing special operations training command and an ANA Commando headquarters brigade.

Soon, the current class of recruits will graduate and earn the maroon patch representing the ANA Commando, a highly regarded and capable force of Afghan special operators, who Coalition officials say are already making a difference with ongoing counterinsurgency operations throughout Afghanistan.

"When Commandos go out on missions, they have the respect of the people and are often feared by the enemy," said a U.S. Special Forces officer who leads Coalition training efforts at Camp Morehead. "Because they know the terrain and understand the cultural dynamics, they've been able to disrupt insurgent activity in ways that we can't, because the local population can easily relate to them."

The Afghan Commando program is modeled after the U.S. Army Rangers concept of operations. They are highly skilled infantrymen who are trained to conduct direct action missions against enemy objectives.

Afghan officials said ANA Commandos go through a careful screening process and are typically hand selected from other elements of the ANA because of their aptitude, talent and special skills. For many of

these recruits, the prestige of the Commando program is only part of the reason they chose to join this elite force.

"We are all Afghans; we take pride in being Commandos, but most importantly, we are defending our country," said 1st Lt. Mohammad Walid, an ANA Commando platoon commander.

When recruits complete their initial Commando training course at Camp Morehead, they will deploy across the country and partner with Coalition special operations teams to conduct missions. But ANA Commando leaders are quick to point out that partnerships with Coalition forces begin on the first day of training.

"We are all Afghans; we take pride in being Commandos, but most importantly, we are defending our country."

— 1st Lt. Mohammad Walid

"We have a strong partnership with the Americans and other Coalition forces that are here helping us train our men," said Col. Mohammad Nadeer, Chief of Staff for the ANA Commando

brigade. "And because our men train together, work together and operate together, we have become more than partners; we are brothers."

Although Coalition SOF trainers said they bring vast experience and expertise in their craft to the Commando training regimen, they said Afghan forces are clearly in the lead.

"We now have a cadre of Commando instructors who are leading the training curriculum here," said a U.S. Special Forces training officer. "The Afghan Commando program brings an increasingly capable dynamic to the fight against insurgents. It's a powerful cultural message when Afghans see their own forces leading operations and building in-roads with the local people."

(Opposite page) Afghan National Army Commando recruits conduct a close-quarters drill at Camp Morehead, Afghanistan, Aug. 4. Courtesy photo.




SOE AROUND THE WORLD - FRANCE
SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND – EUROPE

SOCEUR participates in tributes honoring 66th anniversary of D-Day

*Story and photos by Master Sgt. Donald Sparks
SOCEUR Public Affairs*

Servicemembers assigned to U.S. Special Operations Command Europe, 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group, and 112th Signal Battalion (Airborne) salute in a circular formation with their fellow German comrades in arms at the German Military Cemetery at Mont-de Huisnes, France, as part of a ceremony remembering German soldiers killed in World War II.



More than 50 servicemembers representing the various components of U.S. Special Operations Command Europe took part in numerous ceremonies and events commemorating the 66th anniversary of D-Day in the Normandy region of France June 2-6.

Elements of SOCEUR, 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Naval Special Warfare Unit 2 and 112th Signal Battalion proudly stood in formations throughout the region where Allied forces fought to repel German troops at famous battle sites such as Pointe du Hoc, Montebourg, Saint Mere Eglise and Utah Beach.

As part of the five-day event, the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines visited the Brittany American Cemetery and Memorial, the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial and the German War Grave in Mont-de-Huisnes.

During the week, Col. John Lazaro, SOCEUR Deputy J3, coordinated a special staff ride to give the servicemembers a unique and introspective look at what happened during the D-Day time period from a special operations aspect or contribution at each of the locations they visited.

“A staff ride, or battlefield terrain walk and study, is an essential part in the study of the science and art of war,” Lazaro said. “We would have missed the shot in gaining an understanding of what occurred in Normandy had we not physically touched these sites and walked the ground.”

From a SOF perspective, Lazaro mentioned specifically how Special Forces contributed and impacted conventional operations.

“This was pretty easy to discern when studying the action of the 2nd Ranger Battalion at Pointe du Hoc, but it opened the eyes of some when we talked about both the allied deception, information and psychological operations prior to the 6 June landings, as well as the mission of naval underwater demolition teams on the beaches before the landings,” Lazaro said.

At each of the staff ride sites, the troops were given historical facts about the fighting that took place and how the strategy of war is relevant even today.

During the visit to the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, Staff Sgt. Joel Cruz walked



French World War II reenactors pose on Utah Beach commemorating the 66th anniversary of the famed landing when Allied Forces assaulted the Normandy coastline to liberate France from Nazi Germany.

along Omaha Beach shore and collected sand from the beach to take home with him as a reminder of his experience. Staring out at the English Channel, he was taken aback by how the same scene would have looked 66 years earlier.

“Before coming here, I watched the entire series of Band of Brothers, movies Saving Private Ryan and The Longest Day so I can get a feel of what really took place here,” Cruz said. “It’s amazing how peaceful it is today. I can’t imagine how those Soldiers fought up this terrain as Germans were opening fire on them.”

The highlight of the commemoration was the Airborne Operation in which nearly 300 paratroopers jumped and landed on the La Fiere Drop Zone outside of the town of Saint Mere Eglise, France.

Exiting the drop zone, the paratroopers were greeted by thousands of Normandy residents who applauded and stopped them for photo and souvenir opportunities. Soldiers gave away their skill badges and unit and combat patches freely to the children, who pleaded in English, “souvenir, souvenir.” It was a simple gesture of thanks from paratroopers to the residents in recognition of what took place in 1944 on the same soil.

“This final point sets the conditions for [SOCEUR servicemembers’] return in the future, hopefully with their families with whom they can pass on the story of America’s greatest generation,” Lazaro said.



SOF AROUND THE WORLD - GERMANY
SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - EUROPE

SOCEUR changes out leadership from Kisner to Repass

By Master Sgt. Donald Sparks
Special Operations Command Europe Public Affairs

After two years as commander of Special Operations Command Europe, Maj. Gen. Frank J. Kisner bade farewell to his command's servicemembers and civilians July 26 at the Patch High School Gymnasium, Patch Barracks, Germany.

In traditional military custom, the unit's colors were passed from U. S. European Command Deputy Commander Lt. Gen. Jack Gardner to incoming SOCEUR commander Maj. Gen. Michael S. Repass, signifying the official change of command.

Prior to the ceremony, Kisner was presented the Defense Superior Service Medal for outstanding leadership during his time as commander. Kisner, who was confirmed May 5 for promotion to lieutenant general, will serve next as commander, NATO Special Operations Headquarters, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, Belgium.

"During the last few years, SOCEUR, under Frank Kisner's command, has had a profound impact on our mission in Europe, U.S. Africa Command's mission in Africa and the U.S. effort in Afghanistan," Gardner said. "During this period, SOCEUR was involved in the deployment of over 1,500 personnel in the EUCOM, AFRICOM and CENTCOM areas of responsibility."

Gardner added, "Perhaps most noticeable was the command's impact on special operations forces across Europe and the great partnerships they have built with many countries, particularly with respect to the key role many of these partner nations' SOF forces have played in Afghanistan."

Kisner then came to podium and addressed the SOCEUR service members for the final time.

He particularly praised all of the sub-components – 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Naval Special Warfare Unit 2, 352nd Special Operations Group, and the SOCEUR Signal Detachment -- "for what you bring in support of the nation each day."

Kisner acknowledged the EUCOM directors, the EUCOM Inter-Agency team, EUCOM components, Special



Maj. Gen. Michael S. Repass

Operations Command Africa, U.S. Army Stuttgart Garrison and SOCEUR personnel for their support, leadership and valued commitment during his time in command.

Gardner introduced Repass as a Special Forces leader with a wealth of expertise and experience. He arrives to SOCEUR after serving as the commander of U.S. Army Special Forces Command (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, N.C.

"Throughout his career, Mike has served in a range of conventional, joint and special operations assignments that make him exactly the right guy for this command," said Gardner. "And at a critical time in our nation's history, an important time in Europe, and an extremely important time in our effort in Afghanistan, we are lucky to have him join the U.S. team in Europe."

Repass is serving his second tour with SOCEUR, where he previously served as the deputy commanding general from February 2006 to June 2008.

"Linda and I are thrilled to be back among you after a two-year absence," Repass said. "We took the time at Fort Bragg to feed and grow, and to learn a few things about the Title 10 side of Army Special Operations and how things work on the Service-centric side of SOF."

SOCEUR gets new senior enlisted leader, bids farewell to Master Chief Ivie

*By Master Sgt. Donald Sparks
Special Operations Command Europe*

Command Sgt. Maj. Charles Sekelsky assumed responsibility as the Senior Enlisted Leader for Special Operations Command Europe from Command Master Chief Troy Ivie July 28 during a ceremony in Patch Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany.

In traditional military custom of passing the noncommissioned officer sword, Ivie's transition of responsibility and authority was transitioned to Sekelsky to provide watch and care of the command's Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines.

Maj. Gen. Michael Repass, SOCEUR commander, expressed his emotions concerning the time honored tradition of saying good bye to one experienced senior enlisted leader and welcoming another.

"When we trained the Eastern European armies in the '90s, it was obvious to them they lacked a viable NCO Corps," Repass said. "They quickly realized that was the magic behind the American armed forces."

Repass said having a solid and experienced NCO corps is the key to high performance in Special Operations Forces.

"We welcome an equally capable and highly competent replacement" he said. "I have known Command Sgt. Maj. Sekelsky for a number of years, and he has impressed me from the start. He is also one of our most combat-experienced leaders. Chuck is one of those rare breeds who has seen and done it all. I look forward to working with him over the next three years."



Command Sergeant Major Charles Sekelsky, right, receives the noncommissioned officer sword from Maj. Gen. Michael Repass, U.S. Special Operations Command Europe commander, to officially assume duties as the command's senior enlisted advisor. Photo by Special Operations Command Europe Public Affairs.

Sekelsky moves into his new position from the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School where he was the command sergeant major.

"To the men and women of the SOCEUR team, I look forward to working with all of you as we chart our course in the coming years," Sekelsky said. "As we continue our operations, I ask that you keep a few things in mind: Never forget the sacrifices of those who gone before us, from that day on 9/11 to all of our SOCEUR warriors who have died in Afghanistan and other locations. Let their sacrifices serve as continuous reminder; never forget."

Ivie, who served as the SOCEUR Senior Enlisted Leader since June 2007, is departing to Iraq where he will serve as the senior enlister advisor for Joint Forces Special Operations Component Command-Iraq.

"You were a breath of fresh air and restored viable and respected leadership to both the position and the joint NCO community," Repass said of Ivie. "Equally important, you were immediately effective as the senior NCO in the special operations community – the right man at the right time. You have made a difference, to be sure. Thanks for your service to SOCEUR."

Ivie thanked many by name for their contributions to the command and for making his tenure at SOCEUR memorable.

"In the end, my farewell today is one of mixed feelings and emotions, associated with the people I'm leaving behind," Ivie said. "I am compelled to express my heartfelt appreciation and emotions to the people of this great command."



U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



4/10 SFG (A) activates, exceeds milestones

*By Staff Sgt. Michael R. Noggle
10th Special Forces Group (A) Public Affairs*

The 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) welcomed its newest addition, the 4th Battalion, consisting of approximately 300 Soldiers and achieving 70 percent manning in strength by its activation Aug. 19 in Fort Carson, Colo.

“This is the one opportunity you have in your career to shape something in your own image,” Maj. Guillaume Beaurpere, 4th Battalion, 10th SFG (A) activation commander, said to his Soldiers. “To take ownership of something from the ground and build up from there.”

Beaurpere said reaching 70 percent manning by activation day was a goal early in the process of forming the battalion, adding that Col. Sean Swindell, the 10th SFG commander, put a command emphasis on achieving that goal.

With the benefit of lessons learned from both 3rd SFG (A) and 5th SFG (A), who were the first of the five SF Groups to activate their 4th battalions, 10th SFG (A) had a distinct advantage in developing its lines of effort leading to activation of a new battalion: manning, equipping, facilities and infrastructure and training.

Along the manning line of effort, the battalion decided to build a core staff while filling the three line company headquarters simultaneously rather than standing up each company sequentially. This allowed each company to be on par come activation day and have systems and procedures in place across the battalion. One other key element of consideration was situating seasoned Green Berets throughout the sections, companies and teams.

“We took the very deliberate approach to manning sections, [Operational Detachment Alphas and Operational Detachment Bravos], with a carefully scrutinized mix of experienced non-commissioned officers and Green Berets right out of the [Special Forces Qualification Course],” Beaurpere said.

The second activation line of effort was the fielding of equipment. Similar to the other groups, 10th SFG (A) relied



Special Forces Soldiers practice urban movement on range 60 at Fort Carson, Colo., Aug. 19. Photo by 10th SFG(A) Public Affairs.

on a contract to facilitate the staging of equipment for activating battalions until units are ready to receive and store items over the course of the activation period. Having that initial staging area allowed the battalion to establish facilities such as an arms room and motor pool to receive the weapons and vehicles sequentially throughout the year.

“It was a synchronized equipping effort which allowed us to establish the facilities first, and then subsequently launch the equipment forward,” Beaurpere said. “We did that throughout the year, and it bought us a lot of time to make sure the facilities were prepared and secured to properly store and account for the equipment.”

There was a shortfall in some SOF peculiar systems; however, with assistance at the group level, other battalions laterally transferred equipment to ensure an equitable distribution of special equipment across the unit.

Beaurpere credits his supply sergeant and property book managers with building accountability and property books from scratch. Also to note, as new company commanders are now conducting their change-of-command inventories, there has yet to be a single-loss in equipment or property accountability identified.

Currently, the 4th Battalion and its companies are located in pre-existing facilities on the Group compound area. Those areas required renovation to accommodate the companies and ODAs to train and operate within. This included team room renovation and wiring for network improvement for computers and phones at all levels.

“We had some clear guidance from Col. Swindell as we occupied these facilities,” Beaurpere said. “Regardless of how long we stay here, he wanted us to make sure that we left the facilities in working order for whoever came in behind us, so we took that to heart.”

There are plans to build a battalion operations facility, which will allow the unit to be co-located.

“We have a good plan out there, and now we are simply waiting for the facility to be built,” Beaurpere said.

The final effort in the activation process was training Soldiers within the battalion. The unit conducted a cold weather mountain warfare training exercise last winter and currently has a company conducting Special Forces Advanced Urban Combat training.

Initially, training was focused on individual and institutional skills such as zeroing weapons and physical fitness training and conditioning. It also includes achieving

the U.S. Army Special Forces Command (A) 350-1 training requirements each SF ODA must accomplish to be operational.

“As we progress, the key piece that we always keep in the back of our mind is the validation of the battalion for operational employment,” Beaurpere said.

He further explained their intent is to go through validation throughout the next several months, culminating in a large exercise in late winter or early spring 2011.

“Following that exercise, we would then be postured to execute whatever mission the group commander wants us to execute,” he said.

Beaurpere emphasized the group effort to facilitate activation of the battalion, from the company supply sergeants to the group staff and the application of recommendations and lessons learned from the other SF groups.

“It’s been a coordinated team effort, not only for the guys at the battalion, but also the group staff,” he said. “It’s not something you do in isolation; we had the benefit of other groups doing this. A lot of Soldiers worked very hard and were instrumental in the activation of this battalion.”



Special Forces Soldiers practice positioning and movement after exiting from a helicopter at Fort Carson, Colo., Aug. 19. Photo by 10th SFG (A) Public Affairs.



U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



Recovery in his sights: SF Soldier becomes first amputee to graduate sniper course



*By Caroline Goins
USAJFKSWCS Public
Affairs Office*

John Wayne has toured Afghanistan and Iraq, hunted grizzly bears in Alaska and earned the Silver Star; and as of July 16, John Wayne is the first

Soldier with a prosthetic leg to graduate the Special Forces Sniper Course.

Staff Sgt. John Wayne Walding of Groesbeck, Texas, that is.

In April 2008, Walding and nine other Special Forces Soldiers from a 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) assault team were attacked by the Hezbe Islami al Gulbadin while searching for insurgents in Afghanistan's Shok Valley.

Walding, one of several team members who were injured, took a bullet through his right leg under his knee.

"I ripped off my boot lace and literally tied my leg to my thigh to keep it from flapping around," Walding said.

Over the six-and-a-half hour firefight, more than 150 insurgents were killed. The members of the assault team were each awarded the Silver Star in December 2008 for their courageous actions in Shok Valley.

While recuperating, Walding worked as an assistant instructor at 3rd SFG(A)'s sniper detachment at Fort Bragg. In order to become a full-time instructor, he had to complete the Special Forces Sniper Course at SWCS.



Staff Sgt. John W. Walding stands in front of a Special Forces training facility on Fort Bragg, N.C. after graduating the Special Forces Sniper Course July 16. Walding's right leg is prosthetic; he lost his leg in 2008 while serving with a Special Forces unit in Afghanistan. Photo by Caroline Goins.

During the course, many of Walding's classmates didn't know about his injury and prosthetic leg. Walding said he enjoyed his fellow Soldiers' reactions upon learning about his missing leg.

"At first, [my classmates] were shocked to realize I was missing a leg," Walding said. "Then, they realized 'Wow, he's doing everything I'm doing!'"

After his injury, Walding knew he wasn't going to give up and leave the Army. He also didn't want to spend the rest of his career behind a desk.

"You don't become a Green Beret because you 'kind of like it;' you become a Green Beret because you love it and can't imagine being anything else," he said.

Walding said he refused to lower his personal standards following his injury, and pushed himself to excel as an instructor because he knew teams and Soldiers were relying on him. Due to his past experiences, Walding said he has a lot to offer as a member of a Special Forces team and would not bother trying to get back to a team if he had not felt he could be an asset.

The seven-week Special Forces Sniper Course teaches sniper marksmanship, semiautomatic shooting, ballistics theory and tactical movement. Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Owens, an SFSC instructor in 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), emphasized the importance of these skills, and said it takes Soldiers like Walding to push themselves to the limits.

"Snipers have become more dynamic over the past 10 years," Owens said. "Considering current operations overseas, snipers have never been more prevalent because of the need for shooting in rugged terrain."

Walding said he loves everything about training to be a sniper, particularly the mission, the guns and the skill. He even enjoyed training during the hottest June ever recorded in North Carolina.

"The skill of a Special Forces sniper is unparalleled," Walding said. "This is the most prestigious sniper school in the world. That means something."

"There was never a doubt that Walding would do well in this course," Owens said. "He is extremely motivated, and that never dropped during the course."

"He never asked for special treatment; he did the same training as everyone else, and scored well in all the exercises."

Walding's no-quit attitude has taken him from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C., back to Fort Bragg, N.C., where he's become the first amputee to graduate from the Special Forces Sniper Course.

During his initial recovery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C., Walding set up short-term goals for himself. He was a runner before the incident, averaging 50 miles per week. During recovery, he would get up and run a little more every day, always keeping his focus on that next step.

Walding is using the same process to work his way back to an operational role. As a Soldier, his first step was to finish the sniper course; the next step is acting as an instructor for his fellow Soldiers. He said he's hoping to work his way back to a place on an operational Special Forces detachment.

"I'm John Wayne, born on the 4th of July," Walding said. "This is what I was meant to do."



"You don't become a Green Beret because you 'kind of like it;' you become a Green Beret because you love it and can't imagine being anything else."

— Staff Sgt. John W. Walding



NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

East Coast SEALs host 41st annual UDT/SEAL reunion

*By Petty Officer 2nd Class Trevor Andersen
Naval Special Warfare Group Two Public Affairs*

The Naval Special Warfare community held its 41st annual East Coast Underwater Demolition Team SEAL reunion July 16-18 at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek, Va.

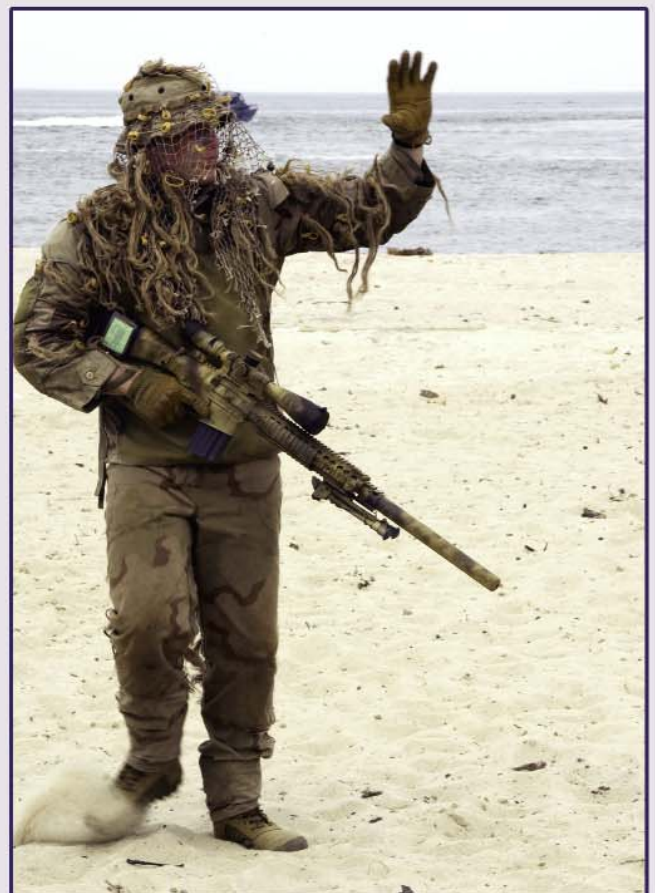
The event reunited active and retired Navy SEALs for a weekend focused on NSW history, heritage and family support.

"It keeps the team spirit going," said retired Senior Chief Petty Officer Bill Furguson, a former machinist mate with River Division 533 and 572. "I consider these guys to be my brothers."

The annual reunion started in 1969 and has since expanded into a weekend of events, contests and a SEAL capabilities exercise.

"The original ones were smaller," said Bobby Cox, executive director of the UDT/SEAL Association and reunion chairman for the past five years. "They were done at the Chiefs' Club picnic area and other spots on base. This reunion continues to evolve as membership grows."

(Top) Members of the U.S. Navy parachute team "The Leap Frogs" deliver a wreath to an awaiting SEAL for the opening ceremony at the capabilities exercise at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek, Va. The Naval Special Warfare Community displayed its capabilities as part of the 41st UDT/SEAL East Coast Reunion celebrations. Photo by Chief Petty Officer Robert Fluegel. (Bottom) A SEAL sniper waves to the crowd during the capabilities demonstration. Photo by Chief Petty Officer Stan Travioli.



And as membership grows, so do the volunteers.

“We had about 100 volunteers this year,” Cox said. “These guys are here year-in-year-out. We couldn’t do it without them.”

This year’s reunion began with a golf tournament and a skeet shooting competition, followed by a tennis tournament. Competitive sports are a mainstay at the reunions because they reinforce the mentality of working together toward a common goal and utilizing the teamwork of many generations of SEALs.

The crowning event of the weekend was the capabilities demonstration, which showcased UDT/SEAL tactics and equipment while providing a brief history of the origins of the NSW community.

Six thousand active duty and retired SEALs, along with their friends and families, gathered at “E” beach where the Leap Frogs, the official Navy parachute team, christened the event by landing with a wreath and an American flag as the national anthem played.

“It’s amazing to see what this community has become since I was around,” said William Dawson, 85-year-old Naval Combat Demolition Unit Two veteran and member of NCDU class one. “I’m very proud to be part of this outfit,” he said. “I sometimes wonder if I were still young, could I do what these guys do? I bet I could.”

The weekend celebration ended with events including several races, a swimming competition and an evening picnic.

(Top) SEALs fast rope onto the beach during their capabilities exercise July 17, on Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek, Va. The Naval Special Warfare community displayed its capabilities as part of the 41st UDT/SEAL East Coast Reunion celebrations. Photo by Chief Petty Officer Robert Fluegel. (Bottom) A Navy SEAL platoon hangs beneath an HH-60H Seahawk helicopter assigned to the Red Wolves of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 84 as they perform a special patrol insertion and extraction exercise during a demonstration at the UDT/SEAL reunion. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Matt Daniels.





NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND

NSWC remembers Operation Red Wings on fifth anniversary

*By Petty Officer 2nd Class Erika N. Manzano
Naval Special Warfare Public Affairs*

Naval Special Warfare Command marked the fifth anniversary of Operation Red Wings with a memorial ceremony June 28, honoring the men who died during combat and the lone survivor of that fateful mission.

The memorial ceremony took place at NSWC headquarters, Coronado, Calif., in front of a tree and plaque that was dedicated to the 11 fallen Sailors and eight Army Soldiers on the one-year anniversary of the operation. Lt. Cmdr. Wesley Modder, Navy chaplain, began the ceremony with an invocation followed by remarks from NSW Chief of Staff, Capt. Steve Nelson.

"We come together today to remember these men, who unselfishly dedicated their lives and service to others," said Nelson. "These men went into battle not for glory or recognition. They believed in the mission, and they willingly put themselves into harm's way to protect and defend freedom."

Following his speech, Patricia Curley was invited to present a bouquet of flowers on behalf of the families of the fallen. Curley is the mother-in-law of Petty Officer 1st Class (SEAL) Jeffery Taylor, who was killed in the operation.

"It felt very good to know that people are remembering (the men), not just the families," Curley said.

The operation claimed the lives of 11 Navy SEALs, and eight Army Night Stalkers, Soldiers assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, who were conducting combat operations deep behind enemy lines east of Asadabad in the Hindu Kush of Afghanistan.

The death of 11 SEALs constituted the single largest loss of life for Naval Special Warfare since World War II.

A four-man Navy SEAL team was conducting a reconnaissance mission in the mountains when their mission was compromised and a fierce firefight erupted.

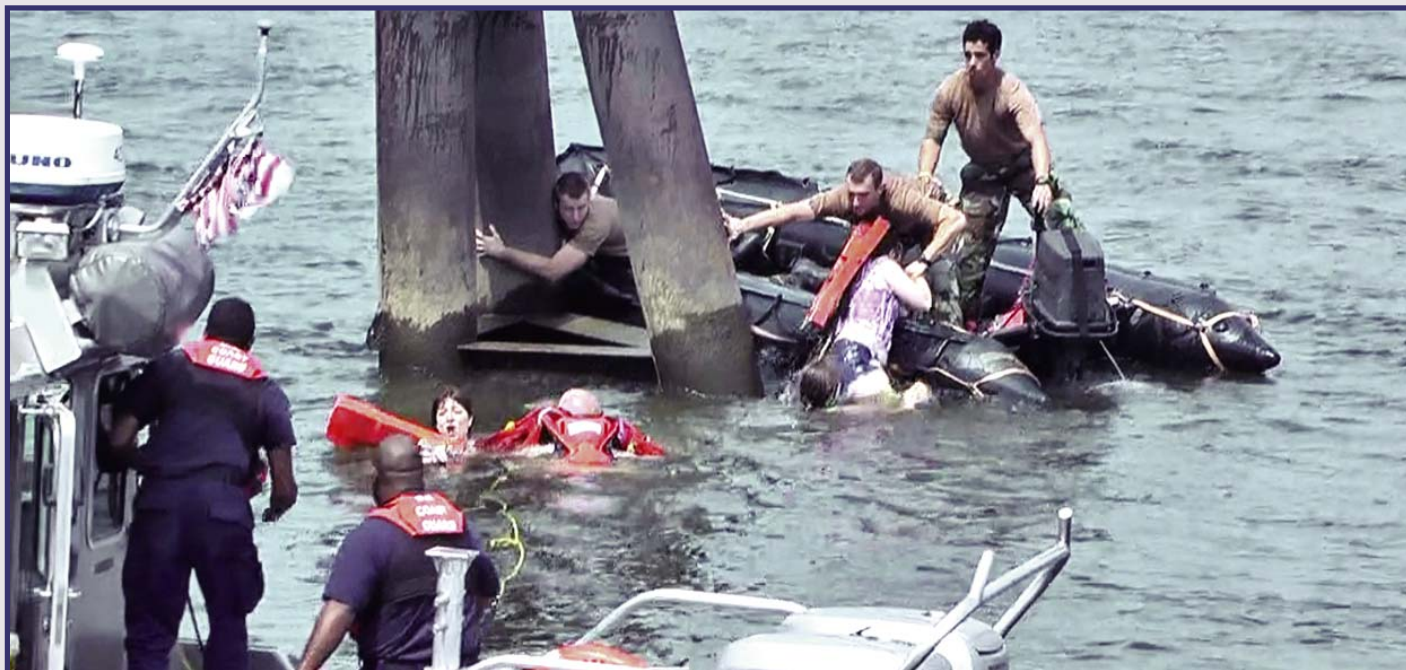
As the fight continued, each SEAL received numerous wounds. Lt. Michael P. Murphy exposed himself to enemy fire to call for reinforcements to save his teammates. A group of eight SEALs and eight Army Night Stalkers rushing to join the battle were killed when their helicopter was shot down before they could land.

The only SEAL to survive the battle, Petty Officer 1st Class (SEAL) Marcus Luttrell, fought and evaded the enemy for several days before being rescued. For their sacrifices, the men were awarded the nation's highest honors - including the Medal of Honor, which Murphy received, three Navy Crosses for his teammates on the ground, and 16 silver stars for Luttrell and the men who were killed coming to their aid.

As the ceremony ended, each name of the fallen was read followed by a single bell strike.

Those who died during Operation Red Wings are:

Lt. Cmdr. Erik S. Kristensen (SEAL)
Maj. Stephen C. Reich
Lt. Michael M. McGreevy Jr. (SEAL)
Lt. Michael P. Murphy (SEAL)
Chief Warrant Officer Corey J. Goodnature
Chief Warrant Officer Chris J. Scherkenbach
Master Sgt. James W. Ponder III
Senior Chief Petty Officer (SEAL) Daniel R. Healy
Chief Petty Officer (SEAL) Jacques J. Fontan
Sgt. 1st Class Marcus V. Muralles
Sgt. 1st Class Michael L. Russell
Petty Officer 1st Class (SEAL) Jeffery A. Lucas
Petty Officer 1st Class (SEAL) Jeffery S. Taylor
Staff Sgt. Shamus O. Goare
Petty Officer 2nd Class (SEAL) Matthew G. Axelson
Petty Officer 2nd Class (SEAL) Danny P. Dietz
Sgt. Kip A. Jacoby
Petty Officer 2nd Class (SEAL) Eric S. Patton
Petty Officer 2nd Class (SEAL) James Suh



Sailors from Special Boat Team 20 helped rescue nine people July 7 from an overturned tourist boat in the Delaware River in Philadelphia. The Navy crewmembers worked with the Coast Guard, Philadelphia Police and fire rescue teams. The boat was struck by a barge and capsized, throwing 37 people into the water. Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Tim Miller.

Naval Special Warfare Sailors rescue nine from overturned tour boat

By Naval Special Warfare Command Public Affairs

Sailors from Special Boat Team 20 helped rescue nine people July 7 from an overturned tourist boat in the Delaware River in Philadelphia.

According to Philadelphia police, the boat was struck by a barge and capsized, throwing 35 passengers and two crewmembers in the water.

Twelve Special Warfare Boat Operators at nearby Penn's Landing immediately responded to a radio distress call and sped to the scene in small boats to recover people in the river.

"We were the first responders," said Petty Officer 1st Class Garrett Rodriguez of Special Boat Team 20. "Some of us jumped out and started grabbing people. They were just exhausted, in shock."

Rodriguez said some of his team members pulled

people into boats while others jumped off a jetty and swam to tourists struggling in the water.

Petty Officer 1st Class Patrick Perdew, a medic assigned to the boat team, said the nine passengers they rescued did not have discernible injuries and were ambulatory when brought ashore.

The Navy crewmembers worked with the Coast Guard, Philadelphia Police and fire rescue teams.

"We were just happy to help," said Navy SEAL Capt. Chuck Wolf, the commander of Naval Special Warfare Group 4. "The city responders deserve all of the credit, but our guys really showed why the Navy is 'America's Navy: A Global Force for Good,' and it shows our ability to adapt to our surroundings and assist with any and all situations."

The boat team was in Philadelphia to attend community relations functions and was preparing to get underway and return to their base in Virginia Beach.



AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Capabilities Exercise a first for 27th SOW

By Master Sgt. Carlotta Holley

27th Special Operations Wing Public Affairs

The 27th Special Operations Wing hosted its first Capabilities Exercise (CAPEX) June 26 at Melrose Air Force Range, N.M., to give approximately 400 Airmen and their families a better understanding of what the wing does in combat and how special operations forces and aircraft interact to accomplish its missions.


“We are doing it because a lot of our support personnel have never seen what it is that they are supporting,” said Capt. Paul Golando, 16th Special Operations Squadron, who was instrumental in coordinating the event. “A lot of our contractors and Airmen grew up with an Air Combat Command mission and mentality, and this is to show how much things have changed.”

For others, the exercise gave their families a chance to get familiar with the base’s mission.

“Every night when I come home from work, I try to explain to the kids what we do, but they don’t really get it,” said Maj. Mark Sudduth, currently the acting wing Inspector General, in addition to being an AC-130 Gunship pilot. “It’s a cool opportunity to show the kids what we do every day and when we deploy.”

The CAPEX was a team effort by Airmen and Army Special Forces. It demonstrated how the operations and maintenance groups prepared aircraft for missions. Explosive Ordnance Disposal personnel set up explosions, adding more realism to the event as well as honing their skills. In the scenario, opposing forces, or OPFOR personnel, captured an Army Special Forces





Simulated artillery explosions detonate during a capabilities exercise, June 26 at Melrose Air Force Range, N.M. The exercise's purpose was educating Airmen and their families about the mission and capabilities of the 27th Special Operations Wing. Photo by Technical Sgt. Josef Cole.



AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

team. A 27 SOW AC-130H Spectre gunship arrived on the scene to provide close-air support with the 105mm Howitzer and 40mm Bofors cannons.

Spectators watched from a mesa after buses transported approximately 400 observers from Cannon Air Force Base and parking area at Melrose AF Range.

Also as a part of the exercise scenario, 27th SOW aircraft conducted pre-assault firings, Soldiers from 10th Air Support Operations Squadron in Fort Riley, Kan., performed High Altitude-Low Opening parachute jumps and other aircraft conducted simulated casualty evacuations.

“A lot of our contractors and Airmen grew up with an Air Combat Command mission and mentality, and this is to show how much things have changed.”

— Capt. Paul Golando

“It was cool how the CV-22 Osprey made all the dirt go flying,” said Chase Carson, the son of Tech. Sgt. Timothy Carson of the 551st Special Operations Squadron.

His brother, Asa, said he really liked the big explosions, and Kyle, another brother said, “it was fun to watch everyone work together.”

“We waited a long time to get to see this stuff, and to finally have you guys put the show on was just fantastic,” said their mother, Angel Carson. “We really appreciate it.”





(Left) A Special Operations team is air dropped during a capabilities exercise, June 26 at Melrose Air Force Range, N.M. The exercise was conducted to educate Airmen and their families about the mission and capabilities of the 27th Special Operations Wing. (Top Right) An AC-130H Spectre gunship flown by the 16th Special Operations Squadron expels flares during the capabilities exercise. (Bottom Right) A large crowd gathers to await the start of the capabilities exercise. Photos by Technical Sgt. Josef Cole.



AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Special Tactics double amputee makes historic jump

Staff Sgt. Shaun Meadows, 22nd Special Tactics Squadron, shares a laugh with his son after completing a personnel drop June 14. U.S. Air Force photo by Airman Leah Young.



by Airman Leah Young
62nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Air Force history was made when a wounded warrior from the 22nd Special Tactics Squadron became the first active-duty double amputee to successfully participate in a personnel drop at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., June 14.

Staff Sgt. Shaun Meadows, along with 39 of his co-workers, conducted a practice run parachute jump from a C-17 Globemaster III in order to prepare for a change of command ceremony.

The combat controller lost both legs in late July 2008 during a combat reconnaissance patrol in Afghanistan when his convoy hit an improvised explosive device.

"It's a huge accomplishment for Shaun to come back from being injured on a mission and to then go up in the air again," said Master Sgt. Angela Fernandez, 22nd STS first

sergeant. "He's doing what he loves."

This practice exercise was the first jump Meadows participated in since his injury.

"Today is significant because we're all very close to Shaun," said Lt. Col. Bryan Cannady, 22nd STS commander. "It's very much like a brotherhood. We're all glad to be here for him and support him."

"Shaun's spirit and desire to do this made us believe we could get it done," said Cannady. "It's an honor, not just for me, but for every guy out there to be doing this today."

Meadows's co-workers said he has not allowed his injury to hold him back or keep him from doing his job.

"Shaun is the epitome of positive," said Fernandez. "He always walks into work with a smile on his face and makes us laugh."

"Everything went well today," Meadows said. "It felt good to get up there and jump again after two years."

Air Force Chief of Staff honors Air Commando One

by Senior Airman Ryan Whitney
1st Special Operations Wing Public Affairs

More than 500 friends, family members and servicemembers gathered to honor and remember “Air Commando One” during a memorial ceremony at Hurlburt Field, Fla., July 2.

Airmen of all ranks, including Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz and Medal of Honor recipient retired Col. George “Bud” Day, attended the ceremony honoring retired Brig. Gen. Harry “Heinie” Aderholt, who died May 20, at the age of 91.

“The quantity of people we have gathered here is indicative of the very high regard in which we all hold General Aderholt,” Schwartz said. “It is a truly a high honor to be among the ‘quiet professionals’ and speak in remembrance of ‘Air Commando One,’ a role model of leadership, a mentor of combat airmanship, a beacon of the timeless value of service to the United States, and a mentor and friend.”

During his 31 years of Air Force service, Aderholt helped nurture and mature Air Force special operations into what it is today. His career took him to Asia, North Africa, Europe, and islands throughout the Pacific.

“I have known General Aderholt for almost a half century because he spent a significant part of his life helping us fight, side by side. Over the years, our camaraderie turned into a great friendship,” said Kue Chaw, who spoke representing the Hmong coalition. “The new generation will miss General Aderholt, but we should celebrate his life together.”

The Hmong were warriors in north Laos who fought against the North Vietnamese for more than 15 years. Aderholt supported them as commander of the 56th Air Commando Wing in Thailand, flying propeller driven aircraft to conduct low-level night interdiction, as well as civic action missions.

“With his passing, our nation has lost a storied member of the greatest nation, a visionary leader of combat air power, and a founding father of modern special operations,” Schwartz



Brig. Gen. Harry “Heinie” Aderholt.
Courtesy Photo.

said. “In the time we have today, it would be impossible to cover even the best of his wartime stories, his finest qualities, or his most notable accomplishments.”

“He was willing to put his career and his life on the line for the sake of the mission and his people,” the general continued. “Heinie was relentlessly devoted to his people, exercised marvelous judgment, and was creative, industrious and sometimes unorthodox with his solutions to a formidable problem. This was exemplified by his approach to combat leadership. As many here can attest, Heinie’s people would do anything for him, and I am proud to count myself among them.”

Even after his service, Aderholt was recognized for his distinct service and leadership. In 2001, he was inducted into the AFSOC Order of the Sword, becoming the third person to be inducted into the Order, wherein noncommissioned officers recognize individuals they hold in high esteem and wish to honor.

“He was in a league of his own, maintaining razor sharp focus on mission success while making the welfare of his men a top priority,” Schwartz said before performing a final salute in honor of the father of Air Force special operations.

The ceremony concluded with a flag folding ceremony and a three-volley salute, performed by the Hurlburt Honor Guard.



Special Operations Airmen train from the air to the water

*By Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes
Defense Media Activity-San Antonio*

Airmen swim in pairs for an early morning dive during their combat dive course June 10 at Panama City Beach, Fla. The Airmen are combat controllers-in-training assigned to the 342nd Training Squadron Det. 2. Photo by Staff Sgt. Desiree Palacios.

It's 3 a.m. in Panama City Beach, Fla. The bay looks like black liquid glass as the motor boat filled with combat controllers-in-training cuts through the water.

The boat comes to the insertion point. The controllers sit on the edge of the boat, and when the order is given, they fall backward over the side into the water. They begin their 3000-meter swim into the night.

This is just part of one of the training blocks in the Air Force Combat Diver Course that combat rescue officers, pararescuemen, combat controllers and special tactics officers go through at the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center in Panama City Beach.

The NDSTC is the only military dive school in the Department of Defense, and each branch of the armed services and the Coast Guard has a detachment here to train its divers.

Because of the nature of special operations, controllers and special tactics officers are often attached to units from other branches of service. They must be able to infiltrate an area by air, land and water.

"Combat controllers don't deploy with other Air Force members," said Staff Sgt. Kaplan Petrik, a pararescueman and combat dive instructor. "They deploy with the Army or the Navy, and they have to be able to do everything their Army and Navy counterparts are doing, and that includes diving if they're working with the [Navy] SEALs or Army Green Berets."

The AFCDC consists of 20 days of open-circuit training, with controllers and special tactics officers continuing on to a 13-day course of closed-circuit training using the MK-25 rebreather, a bubbleless underwater breathing apparatus.

"During the one-man confidence training (in the open-circuit phase), an instructor will provide harassment, take the regulator away, shake them up a little, tie up the regulator, wrap it around the manifold so it forces them to go back and locate their gear and remove any deficiencies in the gear to recover their air," said Staff Sgt. Brian Zmijewski, a pararescueman and combat dive instructor.

During the closed-circuit training, Airmen learn the





basics of the MK-25 and how to navigate at night under water.

On this particular night, the Airmen had to complete a 1000-meter turtleback swim, or surface swim with full gear, followed by a 3000-meter swim 12 to 20 feet under the surface, with only a compass and physical landmarks to guide them to their target point.

They must also navigate any obstacles they may encounter while underwater.

“Anything that’s above surface is below surface,” Zmijewski said. “Everything from the old bridge that was destroyed and placed in the water as an artificial reef to boats, cars, anything you can think of.”

“There’s also dangerous marine life like stingrays as



well,” Petrik said.

All of this must be done with approximately 50 pounds of gear including their underwater breathing apparatus, a rifle, simulated full ammunition magazines, an emergency buoyancy control vest, a tactical vest, canteens and more.

“They’re trying to achieve a one-knot swim speed,” Zmijewski said. “They should be able to swim 100 yards

in three minutes and 1,000 in 15 minutes.”

“So basically times that by 10 and double it,” Petrik said. “They have an hour to complete the subsurface swim.”

Soon after the Airmen graduate from the AFCDC, they will be off to their permanent duty stations and possibly in theater shortly thereafter.



MARINE CORPS FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Combat videographer wins photo competition, Harley-Davidson

*By Cpl. Richard Blumenstein
MARSOC Public Affairs*

When Sgt. Edmund Hatch snapped a photo of an Afghanistan National Army soldier standing guard in the Morghab Valley, in the Herat Province, Afghanistan, during a patrol last Thanksgiving, he was sure he had captured an image that would at least win him an iPod in the Hesco Bastion Ltd. Photo Competition.

Little did he know, his photo would dominate the nearly 1,000 other entries and win the competition's grand prize, a brand new Harley-Davidson Fat Boy motorcycle, which he received on July 7 at the New River Harley-Davidson in Jacksonville, N.C.

Hatch, a combat videographer, was on a seven-month deployment to Afghanistan with the U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, 2nd Marine Special Operations Battalion, when he took the photo. During the deployment, he filled the role of a combat videographer, a combat photographer, and also carried out public affairs missions. He embedded with the MARSOC Marines at the team level and documented them during patrols.

Hatch said he stumbled on the photo competition while scanning the Internet during some down time in Herat.

"I was bored one day and just looked up random things that we had around the camp," Hatch said. "It was a completely random thing."

One of those things happened to be the Hesco Bastion Ltd. Photo Competition. Hesco is a Leeds, United Kingdom, based company that makes barrier type products that are used extensively in the protection of personnel, vehicles, equipment and facilities in military, peacekeeping, humanitarian and civilian operations.

"I saw some of the winners they had in the past and I kind of figured I would have a really good chance of winning an iPod," Hatch said.

Hatch borrowed a "point and shoot" camera from a hospital corpsman and attached it to a pouch on the front of his flack jacket in case he saw a photo opportunity to submit into the competition. Sometime later, Hatch embedded with a team to take footage, and pictures of the ANA guard posts in

Morghab Valley.

"It was actually the first day I got to the Morghab Valley, in Bala Morghab," Hatch said. "It was the first patrol I went on with the team that was out there. It was the first time I got outside the wire in Afghanistan."

There he saw an ANA soldier perched against a Hesco barrier. He removed the camera from his flack, framed up the shot, and took the photo that would land him in the seat of a brand new motorcycle at the conclusion of his deployment.

"I knew I was going to submit it as soon as I took it," he said. "But I still went around camp and took some more. I submitted about 10 or 11 photos."

Hatch said he submitted the photos in December and received notification of his victory two months later. The e-mail he received, however, did not include the details of his victory.

"At first I thought I had just won an iPod because all the first e-mail said was that I needed to e-mail them back and contact them," Hatch said. "I responded, and then a few days later they e-mailed me back and said, 'Congratulations you won a Harley.'"



Sgt. Edmund Hatch sits on his brand new Harley-Davidson Fat Boy motorcycle July 7 in front of the New River Harley-Davidson in Jacksonville, N.C. Hatch, a combat videographer with the U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, won the motorcycle by taking first place in the Hesco Bastion Ltd. photo competition. He took the photo during a seven-month deployment to Afghanistan.



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS

JSOU moves to MacDill

*By Dr. Julie M. Ballaro
Joint Special Operations University*

The Joint Special Operations community at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. recently grew with the addition of the Joint Special Operations University in July. JSOU was moved to MacDill from Hurlburt Field, Fla. to provide higher education to Special Operations Forces leaders and selected national and international security decision-makers through teaching, research and outreach in the science and art of Joint Special Operations.

After 9/11, there was an urgency to provide JSOU courses in greater numbers. Through strategic planning and vision, senior leaders decided JSOU's growing educational capability plus facility and course expansions would be best supported at MacDill.

"Our move to MacDill puts us closer to the command and a large portion of our student population," said Dr. Joe Kilgore, JSOU Dean of Academic Studies.

"The 3,000 people at USSOCOM are both potential students and at the same time recognized experts to use as guest instructors," added Dr. Brian Maher, JSOU president. "The setting at MacDill will also emphasize the joint and international nature of the university."

JSOU, which was established in September 2000, delivers unique SOF educational opportunities through in-residence courses, Joint Mobile Education Teams and integration of SOF curriculum into service Professional Military Education Schools for active duty, Reservists, and civilian faculty and students from all military branches.

JSOU's goal is to "continuously engage itself in understanding and explaining the cold realities and trends that affect our present and future national security." In order to achieve this goal, JSOU recently acquired national accreditation of its academic standards and curriculum evaluated through the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training, a nationally recognized organization by the U.S. Department of Education.

"The American Council of Education is currently conducting an evaluation of our courses for college equivalency, and the Joint Forces Command continues to assess our courses for the Joint Professional Military Education credit," said Kilgore. "We are very proud to announce that JMPE credit has been awarded for two of our

courses, and we expect to receive credit for others soon."

JSOU offers the following courses: the JSOU Interagency Education Program, Joint Special Operations Legal Advisor Course, Joint Special Operations Warfighter Certificate and Joint Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy.

"The university teaches about 5,000 students per year," Maher said. "With the expansion of capabilities afforded to JSOU here at MacDill, we will now be able to support the increase in demand for additional courses."

JSOU also offers courses at the Navy SEAL Training Center in Coronado, Calif., the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Training Center at Fort Bragg, N.C., the Marine Special Operations School at Camp Lejeune, N.C., and Air Commando courses at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

"JSOU continues to develop its recently established Regional-Cultural Division to support growing international engagement opportunities and to initiate an advanced regional expertise program," Maher said. "This approach is expected to benefit both the SOF community and foster closer relationships with SOF's international partners."

By the completion of Academic Year 2010, JSOU will be a full participant in the USSOCOM Global Force Management process, which prioritizes SOF deployments and activities in concert with SOF Components and Theater Special Operations Commands. Maher said this will increase visibility of JSOU's Joint Mobile Education Team commitments for International partners and can be used to establish or reinforce unique engagement opportunities, or fill gaps where engagement is desired but not supportable through normal training activities.

There are plans to construct a new facility in 2013 at MacDill that will represent a university campus fully equipped to meet the military's educational needs with 21st century technology.

"This concept will take into consideration a multi-function, adaptive facility that is the USSOCOM center of joint learning, fostering academic excellence while providing a place to network, exchange ideas and learn," Maher said.



Dr. Brian Maher, JSOU president.



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HEADQUARTERS

USSOCOM hosts first Joint Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy

By the Joint Special Operations Forces Enlisted Academy

As international conflicts progressed and the use of Special Operations Forces increased in recent years, several senior enlisted leaders within the SOF community realized the need for a standardized, joint senior enlisted professional military education course.

With the vision of Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Smith, U.S. Special Operations Command, and the efforts of fellow senior leaders, USSOCOM created the Joint Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy, which graduated its inaugural class April 16, 2010.

JSOFSEA educates senior enlisted leaders in joint force operations designed to counter irregular threats in the joint operational environment. The initial idea behind the course was to combine the strengths of civilian and university

programs with the best practices of PME.

After the inaugural course was completed, all 32 students graduated academically-equipped to lead in a joint environment.

Command Sgt. Maj. Smith emphasized the importance of this course, not just for Special Operations, but for the joint, interagency and multinational communities.

“Our graduates are qualified to serve in assignments at any joint/combined headquarters up to the geographic combatant command level,” he said. “Ultimately, we must never forget the difficult lessons learned throughout history. Understanding the irregular warfare environment, recognizing the very nature of those asymmetric threats, is critical in preventing unnecessary losses, expenses, lengthy campaigns, and potential failure. Educating our leaders today is essential as we prepare for the future.”

Sgt. Maj. Kent Dolasky, JSOFSEA commandant, said



The inaugural graduating class of Joint Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy stands at the Davis Conference Center, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. USSOCOM's Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Smith, and the efforts of fellow senior leaders, created the JSOFSEA. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Meyer.

JSOFSEA's mission is to educate the senior enlisted 'Warrior Diplomat' in mission-oriented leadership programs providing the knowledge to think critically and lead successfully in future joint, combined, and interagency operating environments.

Dolasky further explained the Academy's three main priorities are taking care of service members, analyzing the strategic context of the operational environment, and propagating the intent of the warrior diplomat. The JSOFSEA curriculum is divided into two phases. The first phase consists of six months of Web-based distance-learning. Students and instructors interact via Blackboard, an Internet-based learning system, to accomplish coursework on topics including effective study methods, communication skills and SOF history. Phase two entails two months of in-residence classroom discussions and covers topics such as communications, organizational management, joint leadership and national strategy.

Master Sgt. Bob Lapella, JSOFSEA instructor, said the course focuses senior enlisted leaders on joint doctrine while examining the tactical, operational, and strategic intent of the commanders at all levels of war.

"JSOFSEA is unique in the fact the instructors share a common background with the students," said Senior Master Sgt. Greg Smith, JSOFSEA chief of academics. "The four service SOF components provide professional and experienced SOF operators to serve as instructors. This ensures the academy's educational goals are achieved. The course instructors have more than 300 combined years of joint leadership experience."

Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Kimmich, JSOU Senior Enlisted Leader, said students' SOF experiences will also be useful in the classroom.

"When you combine the student's experiences with the instructors, you have in excess of 1000 total years of unique experiences in various operational environments," Kimmich said. "From this, the students provide numerous insights shared during the



Adm. Eric T. Olson, commander USSOCOM, gives remarks at the graduation of the first Joint Special Operations Forces Senior Enlisted Academy at the Davis Conference Center, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Meyer.

course, which not only increases the operational awareness of the students but also the instructors."

The course is also designed to alleviate the common "spin-up" time when a service member begins a joint assignment.

"With this course, an E-8 or E-9 can walk into a combined joint special operations task force, a combined joint task force, a sub-unified command, or a geographic combatant command and be value added to that command on day one," Dolasky said. "They understand the functionalities and have all of the resources to get the information they need in those environments."

JSOFSEA provides senior enlisted leaders with an assortment of tools they can use in any joint combined or interagency operating environment.

"Unified action and unity of effort are essential to achieving the 'whole of government' approach as stressed by the national command authorities as vital to prevailing in irregular conflicts," Senior Master Sgt. Smith said. "That is what we focus on in this course."

"Ultimately, we must never forget the difficult lessons learned throughout history. Understanding the irregular warfare environment, recognizing the very nature of those asymmetric threats, is critical in preventing unnecessary losses, expenses, lengthy campaigns, and potential failure."

*— USSOCOM Command Sgt. Maj.
Thomas Smith*



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND - HISTORY

Beach Jumpers

How the Allies relied on show business skills to help win World War II

By Tom Neven

USSOCOM History Office

Take a famous actor. Add a British magician, a Hollywood special-effects genius and a Disney sound engineer. Throw in a lot of imagination and technology. Mix well. The result? The Beach Jumpers, a Navy Special Operations unit in World War II that confounded and confused Axis forces about the true location and time of amphibious landings.

The actor

The first ingredient in the mix was a man who made his living working on people's imaginations, actor Douglas Fairbanks Jr. Fairbanks was commissioned as an officer in the United States Naval Reserve at the onset of World War II and assigned to Lord Louis Mountbatten's Commando staff in England. While serving there, he witnessed British cross-channel harassment operations against Nazi-occupied Europe.

Those raids, under the command of British Brigadier Dudley Clarke, relied heavily on deception. They tapped the talents of a genius of sleight-of-hand, Jasper Maskelyne, who conjured up military illusions with Britain's 8th Army as it chased Rommel's Afrika Corps across North Africa. It was, Maskelyne said, a matter of convincing the "audience" to see what you wanted them to see instead of what was actually there.

Fairbanks, son of famous actors and who himself played heroic roles in movies such as "The Dawn Patrol" and "Gunga Din," grew to appreciate the British use of military deception and how it could help the war effort. He was determined to sell the idea to his superiors back in the States. After all, he had the support of accepted military doctrine. The 1941 Fleet Tactical Publication 167, Landing Operations Doctrine, explicitly stated, "Deceive the enemy as to the chosen areas of debarkation as long as possible."

Fairbanks was able to convince Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Ernest King to create a unit similar to the British, and on March 5, 1943, the vice chief of naval operations was charged with the recruitment of 180 officers and 300 enlisted men to form the first of the



Douglas Fairbanks Jr.

Beach Jumpers unit. The announcement stated "the Navy is requesting volunteers for prolonged, hazardous, distant duty for a secret project." The recruits had to meet four general requirements: no seasickness, experience in small-boat handling, enough electrical knowledge to fix a home radio, and basic knowledge of celestial navigation.

A Hollywood special-effects genius and a Disney sound engineer

The Beach Jumpers got their name in a humorous and roundabout way. One tactic they hoped to develop was the creation of loud sounds to simulate a large fleet preparing an amphibious assault. They called upon the talents of Harold Burris-Meyer, a sound engineer at the Stevens Institute of Technology, who had developed the theatrical stereophonic system used to record the music for Walt Disney's movie "Fantasia."

During a high-level conference at the War Department, Burris-Meyer was asked what he hoped to accomplish with his work. He replied, "To scare the be-jesus out of the enemy." His engineering team started calling this the "BJ factor," as in, "What's the BJ factor in this sound?" The letters "BJ" soon became the name for the entire project and morphed into the code name Beach Jumpers.

On March 16, 1943, the volunteers reported to the Amphibious Training Base at Camp Bradford, Va., and

formed Beach Jumper Unit 1. They trained in small-boat handling, seamanship, ordnance, gunnery, demolition, pyrotechnics and meteorology. They would use 63-foot, double-hulled, plywood Air-Sea Rescue boats, each to be manned by an officer and a six-man crew.

Among the many ways to deceive enemies, a primary method was to confuse their radars. If enemies could determine by radar that they faced a tiny flotilla of small boats and not an entire fleet, then all the other countermeasures would be useless. The Beach Jumpers used the APT-2 (Carpet); APQ-2 (Rug); AN/APT-3 (Mandrel); AN/SPT-4; AM-14/APT; AM-18/APT; and AN/SPT-1 (DINA) jamming transmitters. In addition to electronic radar jammers, the Beach Jumpers developed reflector devices, codenamed "windows," which included corner deflectors and flat chaff to significantly enlarge radar cross-sections. Some of the devices were deployed by boat, and others dangled from barrage balloons towed by the boats.

They augmented their radar countermeasures with radio trickery through manipulative or notional deception. This entailed broadcasting in the clear, dummy voice and message traffic that simulated the actual traffic from a very large force. Beach Jumpers researchers, with the help of engineers such as Burris-Meyer, developed large sound systems, codenamed "heaters," to broadcast the sounds of clanking anchor chains, landing craft engines and similar noises of an invasion fleet. These consisted of a wire recorder, five-phase amplifier and 1,000-watt, 12-horn speakers.

No military deception would be complete without some actual pyrotechnics, and for that the Beach Jumpers turned to Fletcher Stephens, who had created pyrotechnic special effects for many Hollywood films. He developed showy rockets and other bright, noisy ordnance to simulate incoming fire. The final touch was the creation of the "gooney birds," the code name for inflatable, human-sized dummies that were dropped into the surf line to simulate infantry troops wading ashore.

Operation HUSKY

The Beach Jumpers saw their first action during Operation HUSKY, the British-American invasion of Sicily in July/August 1943. The Allies faced a unique challenge. After their success in North Africa in Operation TORCH, it was pretty obvious to everyone, including the German and Italian forces, that Sicily would be the next target. On a strategic level, the Allies therefore decided to

make it look like Sicily would be a feint while the true objective would be either the Balkans or Greece. Within the actual Sicily landings, during the night of July 10, 1943, Beach Jumper Unit 1 was to conduct diversionary maneuvers at Cape San Marco, approximately 100 miles west of where the American 7th Army and British 8th Army would conduct their landings on the southeastern and south central portions of the island.

The first attempt did not get far because of high winds and hazardous seas. On D+1, the weather improved, and the operation began at 10 p.m. At 3,000 yards offshore, three Beach Jumpers boats cranked up their "heaters" as another boat moved a thousand yards ahead and began to lay smoke. As the sound boats prepared to make their runs parallel to the beach, a searchlight from Cape San Marco illuminated the area, accompanied by small-arms and artillery fire. The Beach Jumpers sustained no casualties, although a few boats suffered minor damage. At 2:30 a.m., the sound boats were ordered to secure their heaters and approach the beach, which they did, firing guns and rockets. They had also improvised another trick, setting afloat small rafts with cross beams full of Roman candles that would simulate the firing of 20mm guns.

Another operation was conducted on the night of July 12 with all available craft. This time the shore batteries were completely alerted. The Germans were convinced a landing was about to take place, and they fired salvos of six-inch and smaller guns. The operation was a success and no casualties were sustained.

Operation HUSKY accomplished complete surprise due to the uncertainty created in the minds of some German commanders by the diversions and deception. The Beach Jumpers operation was responsible for an entire German reserve division being held in place, as the German command was unsure where the actual landing would take place.

Beach Jumpers continued to work successfully in the Mediterranean through the summer of 1944, supporting the invasions at Anzio, Italy, and southern France. They were used less in the Pacific.

The Beach Jumpers were disbanded after the war, although they were reactivated briefly during the 1950s and during the Vietnam War, where they worked primarily in psychological operations. Former Beach Jumpers are eligible to join the U.S. Navy Beach Jumpers Association and to be associate members of the UDT-SEAL Association.



A scene from U.S. Special Operations Memorial, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., honoring those killed in action in overseas contingency operations. Photo illustration by Mike Bottoms.

GILBERT ALARIZ (B)	RALPH L. THOMPSON (B)	WESLEY B. HILL (DAVID)	ALAN T. BART (DAVID)
INDO PVT USA 880125	INDO CPT USA 880170	INDO PVT USA 880927	INDO PVT USA 880132
VANCE B.	WILLIAM C. HAYES	ROBERT A. BRANHAM	KEVIN D. W. CAMPBELL
INDO SFC USA 880412	INDO SFC USA 880412	INDO SFC USA 881110	INDO SFC USA 880172
1ST	TERRY L. GILBERT	KEVIN L. GILBERT	

**SPECIAL OPERATORS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES
SERVING IN AND PREPARING FOR
OPERATIONS ENDURING FREEDOM, IRAQI FREEDOM
AND OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS
WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN.**



Army Sgt. Justin Bradley Allen
75th Ranger Regiment



Marine Staff Sgt. Christopher J. Antonik
1st Marine Special Operations Battalion



Army Sgt. Andrew James Creighton
1st Special Forces Group (A)



Army Spc. Joseph Whiting Dimock, II
75th Ranger Regiment



Army Capt. Jason E. Holbrook
3rd Special Forces Group (A)



Army Sgt. Andrew C. Nicol
75th Ranger Regiment



Army Sgt. Anibal Santiago
75th Ranger Regiment



Army Spc. Bradley D. Rapphun
75th Ranger Regiment



Army Staff Sgt. Kyle R. Warren
3rd Special Forces Group (A)



Army Master Sgt. Jared N. Van Aalst
U.S. Army Special Operations Command

**Editor's note: Honored are SOF who lost their lives since
June's Tip of the Spear.**

A student of SEAL Qualification Training class 279 conducts Immediate Action Drills in Niland, Calif., June 24. SQT students are trained in the basics of IADs so they can begin to understand how to react as a team to enemy contacts. Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Blake Midnight.

